LABOUR MONTHLY

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LABOUR'S GETHSEMANE

The Editor

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THE REVOLT IN PARLIAMENT

Emrys Hughes, M.P.

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T.U.C. REVIEW REVIEWED

Dave Bowman

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GREECE—THEIR FIGHT AND OURS

Betty Ambatielos

★

Busmen's Award, Johnny Copland; Poverty, the Cuts and the Coming Budget, Margaret Morris; Edgar P. Young on General Giap; D. N. Pritt on 'Report from Iron Mountain'; Edgell Rickword on Public Poetry

MARCH 1968

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Notes of the Month

LABOUR'S GETHSEMANE

'Take away this cup from me: nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt.'
JESUS at Gethsemane.

'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?'
JESUS at Golgotha.

February 19, 1968

Christian readers will, it may be hoped, exercise their virtue of forgiveness for the use of a scriptural reference in a secular, not to say profane, context. But the Government's offensive, the repudiation of every pledge and principle, the surrender to the lords of wealth has dealt a heavy blow to the entire labour movement; there is indeed the 'agony' and the 'sweat' and the 'great drops of blood falling to the ground'. The majority in the parliamentary Labour Party are still content to pray—vainly—that the cup might be taken from them; still say to Harold Wilson: 'Not what I will, but what thou wilt'. Only a minority so far in the parliamentary party, but a stronger minority than in any previous time of trial, and representing the undoubted feelings of the majority of the trade union and labour movement, has raised the flag of direct revolt against this offensive, to fight for the needs and interests of the people, and for the principles of the working class movement and socialism. The battle which has now opened is still only beginning. The full bitter consequences of acceptance of the existing destructive policies have still to be reaped. After Gethsemane comes Golgotha: the crucifixion of the victim of betrayal, and the cry of desolation: 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' But no less surely after Golgotha, after the crucifixion, comes the Resurrection.

British Capitalism and British Labour

The present crisis of the Labour Party is the political expression of the deepening crisis of British capitalism. The two processes are inextricably intertwined. For the Labour Party bears and has always borne a two-fold character: on the one hand, the channel of the revolt of the working class, and of the hopes of millions against the domination of capitalism; and on the other hand, in practical experi-

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ence the instrument of the domination of capitalism over the working class and over the people. Eight decades have passed since British capitalism began to lose its vanguard world position and to decline continuously in the world scale to its present low point in face of the advance of younger capitalist powers untrammelled by its inherited burdens. This meant that, just as Britain had been the first to carry through the bourgeois revolution and the first to develop on the basis of capitalism modern large-scale machine industry, so the objective conditions had ripened first in Britain, by the eighteen-eighties, for the necessary next stage of change, from the regime of obsolescent capitalism to the regime of socialism, which meant politically from the rule of the capitalist class to the rule of the working class. But here the preceding primacy of British capitalism, the traditions inherited from the age of unchallenged world supremacy, and the deep imprint of these traditions on the character of the working class movement in the immediately preceding era, became a conservative force impeding the necessary new advance. The impulse to working class political challenge, to socialism, has developed and expanded continuously throughout this era; but the conservative forces within the existing political structure, and dominant within the traditional labour movement, have so far checked and frustrated this challenge, and smothered each successive left striving. It is against this frustration that the revolt is now developing.

Cracks in the Old Structure

The record of the two-thirds of a century of existence of the Labour Party has been a record of parallel achievement and frustration. From the eighteen-eighties, that is, from the onset of the decline of British capitalism, the modern socialist movement, initially Marxist, developed in Britain; inspired and organised the militant new unions of the 'unskilled' to establish their rights alongside the old craft unions; and through the success of socialist agitation in the unions, finally defeating after a prolonged battle the entrenched 'Lib.-Lab.' traditions of the old leadership, brought into existence by the turn of the century the alliance of the socialist organisations and the trade unions in the Labour Party. Engels had led the way in propounding (in his articles in *The Labour Standard* in 1881) the creative master strategy of this alliance, to draw the powerful trade union organisations into independent political activity in the electoral-parliamentary field on the basis of the opportunities opened by

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Disraeli's Household Suffrage having extended the vote to the greater portion of the organised working class, as the key strategy appropriate to the political conditions of Britain. Unfortunately the Marxist socialist organisation at that time, whose active working class following had done all the original pioneering work, and initially participating on an equal basis in the foundation and leadership of the Labour Party, was frustrated by the narrow approach of many members and the domination of the hidebound wealthy ex-Tory (and subsequent open jingo well before 1914) Hyndman and those associated with him, into surrendering the opportunity of its role of leadership, voluntarily withdrawing within a year of the foundation of the Labour Party, and thereby handing over uncontested leadership to the opportunists. The opportunist socialist leaders (Fabians and ILP), who combined advocacy of a generalised socialist 'ideal' for the future with everyday capitalist politics in practice, entered into alliance with the 'moderate' or conservative-minded leaders dominating the major trade unions, and representing the big battalions of voting strength in the conference, to batter down relentlessly every successive left revolt of the rank and file, impulses of working class militancy, parliamentary rebels or socialist aspirations. Such has been the old structure during these two-thirds of a century. It is this old structure which is now beginning to show cracks.

Immovable Object and Irresistible Force

For two-thirds of a century this steamroller of right-wing domination in the Labour Party, sustained by the leaders of the major unions, has successfully overriden and trampled into the ground each successive left revolt among the membership and local organisations of the broad labour movement. The battle has gone forward continuously and taken many forms. The victory of the first socialist revolution in 1917 brought new features. It brought the adoption of a platform of socialism by the Labour Party in 1918 (just as it brought the extension of the vote to women in 1918, for which the women's organisations had vainly struggled prior to 1914). But that did not change the capitalist politics of the dominant leadership in practice. The lessons of 1917 brought the most active fighters on the left, who had led the way in the years of high working class militancy between 1911 and 1914, and in the struggles against government war measures during the imperialist war, to recognise that the fight against the entrenched and centralised right-wing political machine

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could not be effectively waged by an unorganised dispersed left, but required a new type of political party, based on Marxism, rooted in industry and the unions, active in every political sphere, and devoted to mobilising the widest common movement against the policies of capitalism and towards the aims of socialism. The formation of the Communist Party was a step forward in political clarity and organisation of key sections of the left. But it was still only one part of the left. The right-wing leadership, quick to recognise the significance of this new advance on the left, refused the affiliation of the Communist Party, thus ending the traditional basis of the Labour Party as an inclusive alliance of socialist and working class organisations. This policy of disunity led to a sequel of extending disruption through the years, as the challenge of the left advanced: bans on rights of individual membership; bans on rights of unions to send delegates of their choice; bans on associated individuals and organisations, until the official list of bans and proscriptions is now as long as an old-style papal anathema. The left has had to conduct its battles and seek to promote unity within the limitations of these artificial obstacles. Nevertheless, despite defeats, the left fight, stimulated by the blows of capitalism and the disastrous outcome of right-wing policies, has been ceaselssly renewed, and is reaching its highest point yet in the present situation.

Political Stalemate?

Complaints are often voiced nowadays by press commentators and by critics from the most varied quarters and viewpoints that the present British political situation on top has reached a kind of stalemate; that it is impossible to find a significant difference between the policies in practice of the two alternative governmental teams between whom the present electoral system confines the choice of the electorate; that the electorate is becoming disillusioned with both the major parties; and that this is giving rise to moods of cynicism or apathy or distrust of conventional politics, notably among many young people. There is a measure of truth in these observations. But the complaints are superficial, because they do not touch the root of the problem. It is true that the aspirations of the people, already since the first world war and 1917, when they carried forward the Labour Party to replace the Liberal Party as the second party of the two-party system, and still more after the second world war, with the sweeping absolute Labour majority of 1945 reflecting the desire for a new social order, have been heavily frustrated by the outcome of repeated harsh blows

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of capitalism, depressions and austerity offensives, culminating in the present latest crisis and offensive. But this has not been an inevitable political outcome. The effective cause of the block in British political development has been the block within the Labour Party.

How to Break the Deadlock

During this whole modern era of the crisis of capitalism the people have understandably turned to the Labour Party, as the visible alternative party based on the mass organisations of the working class and committed by its programme to socialism, for the fulfilment of their aspirations. But the ossified situation in the top control of the Labour Party, based on the alliance of the opportunist parliamentary leadership with the old class-collaborationist leaders of the major unions has served to smother, defeat or in the last resort nullify (as in the case of the Scarborough vote for nuclear disarmament) every left demand from below, and hold the Labour Party tied in practice to the requirements of capitalist politics. This outcome has frustrated the aspirations of the people, led to the present disillusionment, and hindered the developing left currents of popular opinion from finding effective political expression. *How to break this deadlock, equally in the internal functioning of the Labour Party, and in the present political situation in Britain, so as to open the channels for the effective political expression, co-operation and advance of the extending body of left popular opinion, alike in the working class and the trade unions, among the technicians and among young people—this is the central problem of the present British political situation.*

Trade Unions on the Move

Hitherto, through all the changes of conditions and personalities, the old steamroller of the alliance of the parliamentary opportunist leaders and the big union chiefs has served to maintain the status quo. MacDonald and J. H. Thomas in the twenties. Attlee and Citrine in the thirties. Attlee and Bevin in the forties. Gaitskell and Deakin in the fifties. But today, under the blows of the capitalist offensive officially sponsored by a Labour Government, changes are manifesting themselves in the balance in the trade unions, and most notably in some of the biggest unions. This is opening a new situation. The engineers are no longer voiced by a Carron, but have elected Scanlon to be their President. The leadership of the largest union, the Transport and General Workers, is no longer in the hands of a Bevin or a Deakin, but of Cousins, who resigned as Cabinet Minister to

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fight against the government's wage policy. Whereas formerly ardent socialists in constituency labour parties used sometimes to moan over the block votes of the unions as a flail of reaction to crush their puny votes, last year's TUC registered more progressive decisions, especially in the domestic and economic sphere, than the subsequent Labour Party Conference. It remains to be seen what the balance of votes will turn out at the Conference of Trade Union Executives at the end of February; but it is already manifest from the 'black-white' character of the Economic Report presented on behalf of the General Council (reviewed by Dave Bowman on p. 113) how delicately the General Secretary and his associates are watching their steps to try to carry some measure of compliance with the government's policy and prevent an open break. Shifts of the balance in the unions can vary and change. But it is evident that the old steamroller can no longer be counted on so automatically to guarantee the permanent domination of right-wing policy. Thereby conditions are gathering to bring into view the possibility of a new alignment of forces, such as can break the present deadlock, promote co-operation of all on the left, and strengthen united working class and democratic advance.

A New Situation

What are the key factors involved in the new situation which is now developing? First, the present stage of the crisis of the dying British imperialist system cuts deeper than is yet recognised or than the supposed remedies now officially advocated under the direct supervisions of the international bankers can cure. The same causes which defeated and brought down the Attlee Labour Government in discredit; which defeated and brought down the subsequent Tory Governments in discredit; which reduced to admitted bankruptcy the measures of the first three years of the Wilson Labour Government to save the pound: these causes still operate. The loudly denounced Tory deficit of £800 m. in 1964 (adjusted in subsequent official returns to £734 m.), had become, after all the emergency measures, extra taxation and sacrifices to restore the balance, still a deficit of £565 m. in 1967. The present desperate devaluation and budget offensive, designed to ensure a hoped for temporary restoration of the balance, and even a vast surplus within two years to pay for heavy continuing overseas military expenditure, investment and repayment of loans, will no more bring a lasting solution than the corresponding Cripps austerity drive during the Attlee government. For the suicidal imperialist policy is still being followed in practice

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(despite all the professions of abandonment), with the attempt to maintain the traditional parasitic economy of British imperialism based on vast overseas tribute, and involving heavy costs for the people at home, instead of facing the realities of the modern world and rebuilding the economy of Britain on a non-imperialist basis. We predicted in 1949, in *Britain's Crisis of Empire*, the fiasco of the measures then being adopted by the Attlee Labour Government to solve Britain's crisis and deficit (attributed at that time to post-war unsettlement). We predicted in 1953, in *The Crisis of Britain and the British Empire* the fiasco of the measures triumphantly proclaimed by the subsequent Tory Government as having solved the problem of the deficit (attributed to six years of Labour misrule). It is no pleasure to have to predict again the fiasco of the final outcome of the measures now being put through by the Wilson Labour Government. But this time the political consequences are cutting deeper, and opening the way to a new situation in the trade union and labour movement, and consequently to a new political situation.

'End of Empire'?

All the talk of 'defence cuts' and 'withdrawal from East of Suez' and the final historic 'end of empire' (how many times the empire has been 'ended' during the past two decades, with a ceaseless flow of books from prominent Labour publicists under such titles as 'After Empire', long before the present positively last appearance, would not bear counting) cannot conceal the hard fact that the estimates for total arms expenditure in the current year, after allowing for cancellations costs and the effect of devaluation on prices, show an *increase* on the previous year. It is anticipated that the Defence White Paper will present a total of £2,300 m., an increase of £100 m. on last year, and 'the largest sum ever recorded in the Defence Estimates' (*The Times*, February 19). The noisy publicity about 'defence cuts' and the 'end of empire' is designed to hypnotise the left and popular opinion into overlooking the real fact that *all* the effective cuts in expenditure in the current year are entirely in the sphere of home expenditure, the social services and the standards of the people. The grand plans for withdrawals belong to the future, for 1970-71. Much may happen before then. Certainly British imperialism is in enforced retreat. New strategic plans are being elaborated in the Gulf area, with the key importance of this area for the oil monopolies, even after the unceremoniously hasty withdrawal from Aden and

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Southern Yemen had been compelled by the strength of the liberation movement. Corresponding strategic consultations are now in progress in relation to Singapore and Malaysia. The conception of the mobile reserve, the nuclear submarine or Polaris killer, which has just so triumphantly fired its first missile, become the lynchpins of modern imperialist strategy. The survey of Britain's 'invisibles' in the contribution of Hugo Rathbone last month and this month shows the extent to which Britain's economy continues to be based on a vast and even extending range of overseas exploitation, the maintenance of which is the key to the economics and politics of British imperialism. The imperialist strategy and crushing arms expenditure is maintained to protect these interests. The objective was all too crudely and undiplomatically expressed by the ineffable Desmond Donnelly (the black sheep whose too open jingoism led him to stray from the fold) when he said in his letter of January 18 resigning the Whip: 'The Middle East military presence contributes over £500 million annually to sterling for a mere £15 million of military expenditure'.

Who Pays?

The costs of this bankrupt imperialist policy fall on the masses of the people at home. The parasitic basis of the economy of British imperialism, exposed by Lenin over half a century ago, when he showed how it was maintained on a massive foundation of world tribute and overseas colonial and semi-colonial exploitation unequalled in scale by any other capitalist power, has always existed throughout the imperialist era, and indeed during the greater part of the preceding period of the nineteenth century world monopoly. There was always for more than a century past an increasing deficit on visible trade; an increasing excess of imports over exports. But up to the second world war this was covered by the parallel increase of the 'invisibles' income, mainly tribute income from world imperialist exploitation (though already during the thirties the first signs of an overall deficit began to appear). The balancing of the books of this parasitic economy in this way was only possible because the overseas costs of the maintenance of this imperialist dominion and exploitation could be thrown on the budgets of the subject colonial peoples. 'Britain's imperial role before the last world war was borne almost entirely by the Indian and Malayan budget' (*Financial Times*, January 4, 1968). After the victories of national

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liberation have ended the old direct colonial rule over the former colonial territories, the overseas costs and especially overseas military costs of maintaining the still continued and even enlarged system of world imperialist exploitation have to fall on the people of Britain. Hence the recurrent economic crises, deficits on the balance of payments, desperate calls for sacrifice and wage restraint, and export drives, which have characterised the whole modern period since 1945 and bedevilled each successive Government, whether Labour or Tory. The proportion of exports to pay for imports has been forced up to a level never before known in the economy of British imperialism; so that, whereas before the last war one-third of imports were unpaid by exports, this has been reduced to an average of one-twentieth during the modern period, and in two years there was even a surplus on visible trade. But even this change was inadequate to meet the rising demands of overseas military costs and new investment. Therefore repeated offensives have to be conducted against wages and standards, and against demands for increased wages, falsely presented as the cause of the economic difficulties. So it comes about that a Labour Government, returned with an absolute Labour majority on a programme of expansion, full employment and rising standards, has to put through measures of restriction which increase unemployment, and follow this up with the most ferocious offensive yet on wages, standards and consumption.

A Four-pronged Offensive

The present offensive which the Government is now conducting has four prongs. The first is devaluation, which means an all-round rise in prices. The second is the extensive range of cuts in the social services and new charges announced at the same time as devaluation. The third (and the key to the whole) is the wage policy, to prevent wages rising to meet the increase in the cost of living: in other words, an all-round cut in real wages. The fourth is the Budget which is now being prepared, under the supervision of the international bankers, with the plainly pronounced aim to impose, in addition to the all-round cut in real wages by the wage policy, a heavy further cut in consumption through the weapon of taxation, to an amount not yet specified, but widely estimated at figures varying from £300 m. to £400 m.

A team from the International Monetary Fund will be looking over the shoulder of Mr. Roy Jenkins, Chancellor of the Exchequer, while he makes his preliminary Budget calculations next week.

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> It would be wrong, I was told on good authority today, to assume that this team will actually participate in the writing of Britain's Budget—but, on the other hand, it will state its own idea of the extent to which the IMF believes that demand should be cut, and the figure thus produced by the Fund team is one from which Mr. Jenkins will certainly be constrained to work.
>
> Washington correspondent, *Financial Times*, February 16, 1968.

1931 in a new form. The Chancellor has discreetly said that he is not yet in a position to state the figure by which he will seek to cut consumption in his Budget, but that he is waiting for the result of the Conference of TU ECs on February 28, to see whether the General Council's voluntary wage-vetting plan will be adopted, and that he will then determine his action in the light of the relation of forces among the trade unions there revealed. Precisely. Here is the field of battle. The wage policy is the heart of the offensive.

Working Class Resistance

Premier Baldwin's famous formula of over forty years ago 'All Wages Must Come Down' led to Red Friday and the General Strike. Today the open offensive to reduce all real wages by raising prices through devaluation and increased taxation, while simultaneously demanding that there must be no wage increases to meet the rise in the cost of living, and threatening the use of legal powers to prevent such increases or the fight for such increases is being launched at a time when the working class is far stronger in numbers and organisation than forty years ago. Even though the offensive is launched this time under the auspices of a Labour Government, the temper of the organised workers is by no means disposed to accept easily the proposed all-round cut in real wages, while profits and share prices have soared to record heights. Declared company profits in the last quarter of 1967 were 4.6 per cent above the preceding year; and by Janauary 1968 this had risen to an increase of 5.1 per cent, with dividends showing a 6.1 per cent increase. A dinosaur like ICI declared in February 1968 an increase of profits by £15 m. or 17½ per cent. 'Devaluation tends to put up company profits sharply' (*The Observer*, February 11, 1968). With high bank rate the interest on the national debt has risen from £1,136 m. in 1965-6 to an estimated £1,345 m. in 1967-8. The rush for gold by the big fish (ordinary citizens are forbidden by law to possess it) has demonstrated the lack of confidence in the currency, with widespread talk, including by Aubrey Jones, of a future second devaluation. The attempt to disguise the attack on wages under the bland formula of an 'incomes policy' supposed to apply to 'all incomes', on the grounds of the high

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taxation of the declared incomes of the ever extending band of officially defined 'millionnaires' (those with over £100,000 declared income) can deceive no one, not only because tax evasion by the rich has now become a recognised industry, and the vast perquisites of the top directors fall outside declared income, but because the real wealth of the rich lies in their capital holdings. *The Times* on December 15, 1967, published a table under the title 'The £400 m. League', showing 40 company directors possessing shares worth £400 m. ('ten of Britain's largest and best known companies are under the control of a single family group'), thus incidentally disposing of the fashionable 'managerial' theory of modern capitalism as having supposedly divorced management from ownership.

5 per cent . . . 3½ per cent . . . Nil

Under these circumstances it is not surprising that the Prime Minister and his colleagues should have shown such deviousness and contradictory confusion in defining their wage policy in terms of figures. When the Prime Minister met the TUC in January he announced that the aim would be to keep down any wage increases in the coming year, after the period of 'severe restraint', to a general level of 3½ per cent (while it is recognised on all sides that devaluation is expected to raise prices by 5 per cent). Immediately the question was asked whether this meant wage rates or earnings, since a wage rate increase of 3½ per cent could mean, after allowing for overtime, bonus payments and local agreements, an increase of 5 per cent in earnings. Optimistically Mr. Woodcock for the TUC, struggling with the problem how to wheedle reluctant unions into accepting the hated policy, plumped for 5 per cent, to consist of 3½ per cent in wage rates and 1½ per cent in supplements. Thereupon Mr. Wilson in Parliament on January 18 proceeded to offer an elaborately tortuous explanation which, in the view of *The Times*, left the whole situation 'unclear', and in the view of the *Financial Times*, revealed 'no clear policy on wages'. But Mr. Wilson's factotum, Mr. Peter Shore, meeting the employers of the CBI, was reported to have assured them that the real aim was a 'nil norm'. 5-3½-Nil. Going-going-gone. In other words, the real outcome depends on the battle. It depends on the strength and determination of the class forces ranged in this battle. The Government is already threatening to bring in special legislation for further powers to deal with resisting unions, militant trade union officials or members, or strikers. The challenge to trade unionism and to the whole working class is open. In this battle the

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unions are the representatives of the true interests of the whole people.

Revolt in the Parliamentary Party

The storm of popular anger aroused by the devaluation offensive has found its reflection in an open revolt and abstentions, despite all threats of discipline, in the parliamentary labour party on a scale exceeding previous revolts. The various opinion polls have shown the heaviest swing against the government since polls began to be taken; and the coming series of by-elections may be expected to reinforce this lesson. The description of the government as having adopted Tory policies is no longer confined to the left, but has become a commonplace:

> Mr. Wilson, in a retreat that looks like a rout, is having to vindicate Toryism. He is having to bring in now, with the Labour Cabinet and the wretched parliamentary labour party supporting him, high Tory measures that no Tory Government this century dared attempt except under the camouflage of a national government. . . . It is falling to Mr. Wilson of all men to re-establish the validity of Tory policies and Tory economics.
>
> (*The Times*, January 15, 1968)

That is one side of the medal. In the straitjacket of the two-party electoral system the long discredited Tories are rubbing their hands to reap the advantage. But the other side of the medal is shown by the revolt in the parliamentary labour party. Twenty-two Labour MPs stood by their election pledges and refused to vote for the cuts programme. The vote on prescription charges will provide a further test. The prolonged discussions about discipline in the parliamentary party are a measure of the extent of this crisis. So long as it was a question of a single member, as in the case of Pritt, or of a few individuals, as during the Attlee government, the machine did not hesitate. But with twenty and over the problem takes on a different character. Hence all the smooth talk about the new 'liberal' spirit of discipline. For the moment the experiment of suspension for a month has been tried, while the new code is prepared. But further tests will come. If twenty or more stand firm, the operation of the executioner's axe will be less easy. For the would-be executioners recognise that this would represent, no longer one or two individuals to destroy, nor a few on the left around a highly unstable hero like the Bevanite episode, but a grouping representative of strong currents in the labour movement throughout the country

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and in the trade unions, and capable by their stand of promoting the unity of all these forces to advance to a new stage of the political labour movement.

Trade Unions and Politics

For the most significant feature of the new situation which is now developing is that the revolt which is finding expression against the surrender of the labour movement to Tory policies, against the attack on wages, the social services and living standards, and for an alternative policy, is advancing simultaneously in the parliamentary party and among the trade unions, and with closer contact on both sides than at any time previously. The policy decisions of the Scarborough TUC last September were the exact reverse of the policies being put through by the Labour Government. The Scarborough TUC specifically condemned the Government's economic policy, the promotion of unemployment and the wage freeze, no less than the policy over Vietnam. The Government pursues a policy directly contrary to the decisions of the unions and in fact threatens the unions. Yet the trade unions constitute the political basis of the Labour Party, not only in the sense of providing nearly nine-tenths of the membership and the bulk of the central finance, but also in providing the basis of the appeal to class solidarity and unity for support. With the present sharp contradiction it is inevitable that some voices should be raised in the trade union movement questioning the payment of the political levy or the linking of the trade unions with a political party, or hankering after retrograde American models. The real conclusion is the opposite. The political levy is the expression of the conscious political role of the unions; and all the problems of modern trade unionism are more than ever bound up with politics. But the political levy carries with it political responsibility. It is for the trade unions to see that they get value for their political commitment, that they get representation and policies corresponding to the needs of trade unionism and the interests of the working class, which are the truest expression of the interests of the overwhelming majority of the nation. The dangers of the present situation are manifest. The offensive is severe, and Toryism is calculating to take advantage of labour disillusionment. But the parallel advance of the left revolt in the political labour movement, and of the representation and strength of the left in the trade unions, is opening the way to an alternative perspective, to break old barriers and rally and unite all the progressive forces of the labour movement

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and the people in order to defeat the reactionary offensive and achieve the new political advance which is now so urgently necessary.

Anniversaries

This year sees a number of anniversaries. It is the centenary year of the Trades Union Congress. It is the hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the birth of Karl Marx. The record of British trade unionism, of 'the first-born sons of modern industry', as Marx called them, is a record of class solidarity and tenacious struggle and maintenance of unity, through many ordeals, reaching today to the highest level of strength and organisation. The teachings of Karl Marx illuminate the path to the victory of the working class and socialism. Let us hope that the trials and struggles of this year will help to forge further the unity of these two great forces, of the organised class and of the principles of the class advance to victory, whose unity can alone solve the problems of Britain's future. Let us hope that Labour's Gethsemane will prove the prelude to Labour's Resurrection. **R.P.D.**

(By an inexcusable transposition the February Notes, in concentrating on the analysis of the phenomena of 1931, referred the New York Stock Exchange crash of October 1929 to 1931 and the collapse of the Austrian Credit Anstalt in 1931 to 1929. Our apologies to our readers. R.P.D.)

LABOUR MONTHLY FORTY YEARS AGO

At the Liverpool Conference of the Labour Party there were two species of decisions arrived at. One marked the commencement of the active policy of exclusion of members of the Communist Party, and though organisational in form was of the deepest political significance. The other was a programmatic decision embodied in the series of resolutions which were collectively known at that time as 'A Co-ordinated Policy of National Reconstruction and Reform.' . . . As Mr. Henderson reminded the Conference in speaking to this resolution, 'thirty-three years ago he had voted at the Norwich TUC for the socialisation of all the means of production, distribution and exchange, and he was still fighting for it'. But then he proceeded to say:

> 'They wanted to get on, and the use of phrases, now that the Party had reached its present stage, was not going to assist them to get on as he thought they ought.'

(From 'The Normal Condition of the Labour Party', by Hugo Rathbone, *Labour Monthly*, March 1928.)

MAY DAY GREETINGS

A reminder to all organisations wishing to advertise their greetings in our May issue—final date for receipt of copy: *Monday, April 8.* Please order your space well in advance of this date.

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THE REVOLT IN PARLIAMENT

Emrys Hughes, MP

THE stand of the twenty-two MPs who refused to vote for the cuts in the social services that were contained in the notorious package deal and their subsequent suspension for a month from the Parliamentary Labour Party is one of the most significant incidents that has occurred in this Parliament.

It was a trial of strength between the disciplinary machinery of the Parliamentary Labour Party backed by the Government and a group of MPs who stubbornly refused to be threatened, bullied, browbeaten or persuaded to go into the division lobby to support something that they knew in their hearts to be wrong. Not only was that their deeply-held personal belief but it was a determination to honour election pledges and a refusal to go back on conference decisions and to acquiesce in measures which the official Labour Party had so strongly denounced when they were introduced by a Tory Government. Much of the argument has raged around the proposal to reintroduce prescription charges which Labour in opposition condemned as a tax on the sick, which undoubtedly it is.

As I write nobody quite knows how it is going to work or indeed whether pressure from MPs may compel the Government to abandon it. But if it is forced through a reluctant and ashamed House of of Commons by threats of discipline, suspension or expulsion from the Labour Party it will be to the eternal disgrace of a Labour Government and a cynical flaunting of Parliamentary democracy. For not only was this an issue in two General Elections but as late as the last Labour Party Conference at Scarborough Harold Wilson boasted of the abolition of prescription charges as one of the great achievements of the Labour Government.

Now it is true that we have been promised that the old-age pensioners, young people and the chronic sick (how they are to be defined nobody quite knows) are to be exempted. But the low-paid worker and his wife, who have already a severe enough struggle to live in a world of rising prices and with worse promised in a tough Budget, will be taxed again, and this will take place when there is sickness in the home and the family income needs to go up, not down.

This is inevitably the sort of thing that leads to a new wave of wage demands. It is mean and contemptible, especially when one

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realises that it is a trifling irrelevancy as a contribution to what needs to be done for the recovery of British exports and the improving of the economy. It may be a trifle in the national expenditure but it is symbolic of the struggle between those who want to see a Socialist Britain and those who are trying to work a discredited and broken-down capitalist system.

Then there are the other cuts in social expenditure. The postponement of the raising of the school-leaving age is again a retreat from Labour's election programme. At a time when other nations are realising how important it is to train their young generation for increased production in the technological age Britain is to lag behind—a stupid, short-sighted policy even if we are to attempt to continue operating a capitalist economy.

Then there is to be the brake on housing. True, houses are being built at a rate that Britain has never known before, but still there is so much to be done—the slums to be demolished, the long waiting-list of homeless to be reduced and with changes in the areas of population inevitable, the new towns requiring to be built—that even the question of slowing down the housing programme is completely unacceptable. As for school milk and school meals, does anyone think that charging for this contributes to the building of a prosperous economy?

All this helped to stiffen up the twenty-two members to dig in and make their stand. Let us hope that this will be followed up by a stand by the trade unions and in the constituencies. Nobody can envy the plight of the unfortunate Labour Party candidate who has to defend the cuts at some approaching by-election. In Scotland and Wales there will inevitably be an increase in the protest vote which will go to the Scottish and Welsh nationalists. Politically, as well as economically, these items in the package deal are sheer stupidity.

I do not think that it will take a long time for this to be crystal clear to the Labour Party and trade union rank and file. We cannot win a general election in two-and-a-half years' time if this trend in policy is not speedily reversed. That is what the twenty-two MPs realised when they rebelled.

In Forthcoming Issues:

MARTIN JACQUES on Youth and the Cuts.

DICK NETTLETON, General Secretary of CND, on Peace and the Easter March.

GORDON SCHAFFER on 'Wither Germany?' by Walter Ulbricht.

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T.U.C. REVIEW REVIEWED

Dave Bowman

AT the 1967 conference of trade union executives convened by the TUC the delegates had as an agenda a report of approximately eight pages. One of the propositions contained in that report was:

> The General Council intend to issue towards the end of each year an annual report on the economic situation and the prospects for the ensuing year.

As a consequence, the conference of trade union executives meeting on February 28, will have before it an Economic Review by the General Council of 90 pages. This review is without doubt a very elaborate analysis of Britain's economy brimful of economic concepts and terminology. I am certain that many a gallon of the midnight oil has been consumed by the trade union executive members attempting to discover what it is all about. Look at some of the heads of the review. 'Trade Unions and Economic Strategy'. 'Productive Potential and the Balance of Payments'. 'Stop-Go and the Next Two Years'. These are daring subjects to tackle at a conference which at most will last for 4 hours. Needless to say many hours will be spent by the trade union executives themselves in debating their attitude to the review.

In an article of this kind it is impossible to deal in any comprehensive manner with the General Council's review but a selection of the important aspects is necessary to show its character.

The review continues to accept an Incomes Policy although it does make clear that the reason for having an Incomes Policy is not to hold real wages in check, but on the contrary to help provide conditions for higher wages and better working conditions. This has largely been forced on the General Council by the decision of the 1967 TUC and more so by the continued exposure of the Government's Incomes Policy as an anti-working class policy. Having restated their adherence to an Incomes Policy the General Council then propose a norm for wage increases. They believe it is realistic to set an annual target for economic expansion of 6 per cent, and 5 per cent annual increase for productivity for the next four years. Keeping incomes in line with productivity, and giving 1½ per cent for increases at local level (productivity payments) the General Council concludes the wage norm increase should be 3½ per cent. This estimation, it says, holds good for mid-1968-69, 1969-70 but the question will be reviewed next year.

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All this is nice simple mathematics. If an Incomes Policy is accepted then it is necessary to make such estimations of productivity and the degree to which incomes will benefit, although all the exercises up to present always deal with earned incomes and never those drawn from rent and dividends.

What really is missing in the review is any understanding of the facts of present-day industrial life. While the General Council make these cosy estimations, Jenkins, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, speaking at (appropriately) a banquet of overseas bankers, says: 'Private consumption will have to be severely curtailed, particularly in 1968, and 1969.' No 1½ per cent local and 3½ per cent wage increase to be allowed by the Government and this tougher than tough line of the Government is forcefully illustrated in their determination to freeze the £1 a week rise negotiated by the employers and the T&GW Union for municipal busmen, and their attitude to the justifiable wage claims of many other trade unions.

Surely this is the reality of the great wages struggle by the unions. The acceptance of an incomes policy which directly checks and freezes earned incomes alone and allows prices to rise, no matter what is said and done to justify it, is in effect allowing and encouraging the Government to continue to force on the trade unions their policy of wage restraint and wage freeze.

It seems certain that the review was completed before the decision to devalue the pound and the problem of devaluation comes in almost as an aside. The review however accepts that increases in the cost of living arising from devaluation will not be a reason for claiming a wage increase. On conservative estimates devaluation will result in approximately a 5 per cent increase in the cost of living (it has already resulted in a 3 per cent increase and more is to come) and this alone shows the hollowness of the General Council's suggestion of a national 3½ per cent wage increase. In effect what the General Council are suggesting, at best, is that British trade unionists accept a cut in real wages in 1968 and 69.

Much is said in the review of the plight of the lower-paid worker. No doubt the General Council accepts this as a priority. At the 1967 congress a decision was reached for a £15 minimum for all workers. Now the review changes this to a £15 minimum earnings guarantee for adult male workers for a 40-hour week. (Women have been dropped, although in other parts of the review it does state that increases for women must have some priority.) A £15 minimum earnings guarantee for a 40-hour week will include pay-

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ments for bonus, shift work and any other special payments. What the review is therefore advocating is that a minimum fall-back earnings guarantee similar to that of the dockers now be the policy, a decisive change from the policy decided on by the 1967 TUC.

There are several other very big weaknesses in the review. There is no argument for an extension of public ownership of Britain's main industries, so long a decisive feature of TUC policy. The review in line with the demand it makes for more planning and greater investment seeks a development of public agencies such as the Industrial Reorganisation Corporation and the National Research Development Corporation but it entirely misses the point that without public ownership of the main industries the control of planning and investment will remain in the hands of the giant private monopolies, daily becoming more monopolised by the mergers now taking place.

Another great weakness is the meek acceptance of transfer of labour without guarantees and the acceptance of the Government retraining schemes. This is rapidly becoming a burning issue in Britain. The review says 'Training centres now deal with 12,000 workers annually. By the end of this year the figure will reach 17,000'. But railways alone lose 30,000 workers each year and many of the men sacked from the railways leave their skill behind them because it is only applicable to railways. Exactly the same can be said for mining which will lose 80,000 jobs this year, to say nothing of the giant mergers which are creating rationalisation and huge labour surpluses. Note the 6,000 workers sacked by the GEC-AEI merger and the 3,000 from Hawkers. This figure of 17,000 is only a drop, a very insufficient drop in the bucket of the necessity of retraining workers for other jobs.

The review says nothing of the very thorny problem of trying to place retrainees in skilled or even semi-skilled jobs after they have completed their retraining period. The trainee v. the apprenticed craftsman is a very bitter fight and certainly in areas where there are labour surpluses it is bad and will be worse as more workers become trainees. On this question it is the duty of the TUC and its affiliates to give some guidance and not leave it to a battle between the individuals at local level to fight it out in the ring—craftsmen in one corner and the trainee in the other.

Despite these and other weaknesses the review has many positive features. It demands full employment—control of prices—a greater element of workers participation on the boards at national area

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and plant level—a wealth tax—increased family allowances—curtailment of overseas investment. It clearly shows the absurdity of some of the investment grants made to industry, such as the investment grant to oil refining while withholding grants from gas and electricity production. These will obviously have a great appeal to the left.

One of the bad features of the Conference of Trade Union Executives is that no amendments are accepted. The review must be accepted as a whole or rejected entirely. Although no doubt in discussion many delegations will put their point of view on what they support and what they don't. Still on the vote it is either accept or reject.

It is in such a situation the Trade Union Executives will have to vote. Many unions are seriously hampered in their work by Government action on wages and conditions of labour. If the review is carried on the vote it must intensify the problems of the unions seeking wage increases. It is incontestable that if the national wage norm of 3½ per cent for mid-1968-69 is accepted every member affiliated to the TUC will have a big cut in real wages which can quickly lead to higher unemployment. This is the very heart of the review and no doubt many trade union executives while welcoming the progressive parts will because of this central weakness vote for rejection.

OUTLAWED WAGE AWARD FOR BUSMEN

Johnny Copland

Scottish National Delegate, Municipal Bus Trade Conference, Transport and General Workers' Union

FOR the first time in many years the government have taken upon themselves 'rights' which should have gone out with the feudal system. They have taken away the rights fought for by the organised working class through the trade union movement and workers' political parties, the right of free bargaining between employer and employed. It is the more tragic that it should be the Labour Party that takes this unsavoury and reactionary mantle upon itself.

Let us examine the history of the now outlawed busmen's wage award.

The National Joint Industrial Council for Municipal Busmen, i.e. equal numbers of employers and busmen, meet at national level to determine wages and conditions for drivers, conductors, cleaners and labourers employed in the industry.

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So bad had relations become between employer and union that the NJIC terminated on October 12, 1967, at the instigation of the union. This because of two main factors.

Firstly, the penal clause which stated that if we took industrial action a service bonus paid twice yearly could be withheld for the past six-month period. As the payments are from 10s. per week for six months' service to £1 10s. for 20 years' service it will be seen the longer-service man gets most heavily penalised.

Secondly, the fact the craftsmen had been offered £1 increase and we were offered nothing.

The employers and union met under the chairmanship of the Minister of Labour, Ray Gunter, on December 14, 1967, the object to find some formula to have discussions started on the claim for the Busmen's Charter. Mr. Gunter asked that as the PIB was issuing a report on the Municipal Busmen they should await this report.

Two things are of interest here.

Firstly, quite a number of municipalities were taking action. Some were on strike, some banned standing passengers, banned overtime and refused to negotiate any form of economy within their undertakings. Further strikes were planned for December 16 and 17.

Secondly, there had already been no less than five inquiries into the bus industry including one already by the PIB in early 1966. All of these had been shelved.

After two hours of fruitless discussion the meeting conveniently ended. Immediately afterwards the employers approached the union and made the following offer:

1. An immediate increase of £1 per week to all adult workers covered by the old NJIC agreement, due payable from the first full pay period following December 14 (this will be subject to clearance by the Ministry of Labour).
2. That Clause (F) (the penal clause) of the service payment scheme be amended.
3. That the executive of the municipal employers seek a mandate from their federation that national rates of pay shall be minimum.
4. The present £2 holiday pay to be re-assessed.
5. Service payment forfeiture to apply to periods of withdrawals of labour.
6. That the NJIC be immediately reconstituted.
7. The trade union agree to recommend an immediate return to normal work.

The NJIC was reconstituted on January 11, 1968, and agreed

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that the Council endorse the agreement reached by both sides on December 14, 1967. As the PIB report had not been adopted (this in spite of the fact no one had asked their opinion on the present negotiations) and the Minister of Labour had advised the employers not to pay, it was agreed that the NJIC go to the Minister of Labour to report our settlement.

We met the Minister of Labour at the Ministry on January 17, 1968, at 3.30 p.m. The settlement was reported to the Minister Ray Gunter who was acting chairman. He immediately turned on the employers and accused them of selling him down the river. Why, he asked, had they made this ridiculous offer? The employers' reply was most enlightening. We made it, they said, because you asked us to get the buses back on the road for Christmas. The only method was to buy them back and you knew that. It was a shot-gun settlement at your request, but having made it we are prepared to honour it. The Minister's reply was that should they attempt this he would invoke Part 2 of the Prices and Incomes Act with all the dire consequences: fines of £500, jail, etc. and he would take them on individually or collectively. The trade unionists' contribution, both officers and lay members, would have made any socialist Minister of principle resign. So where do we go from here? Faced with a completely unscrupulous Minister of Labour, backed by the Prime Minister, the Cabinet and the whole of the Labour Government (not one MP has raised his voice in our defence). Referred to a board which has already adjudicated (the PIB). Outlawed in the courts even *before* our case is heard.

The Scottish busmen both at their Annual Passenger Conference and since at local branch level have demanded a national stoppage. This despite the fact they well knew the consequences. This I feel is still the only course left. A strong and clarion call from our leaders is all that is necessary for the busmen to accept the challenge.

However, this is not just Frank Cousins v. Harold Wilson or Ray Gunter, nor even the T & GWU v. the Government. Surely we must realise this is a fight for the whole of the trade union movement.

It is the busmen today, it may be you tomorrow. Everything for which our forebears have died, been deported, jailed, fined and victimised is being destroyed in one swoop. Surely we are entitled to the full support of the TUC and Scottish TUC to uphold the traditions and foundations upon which our great movement is built.

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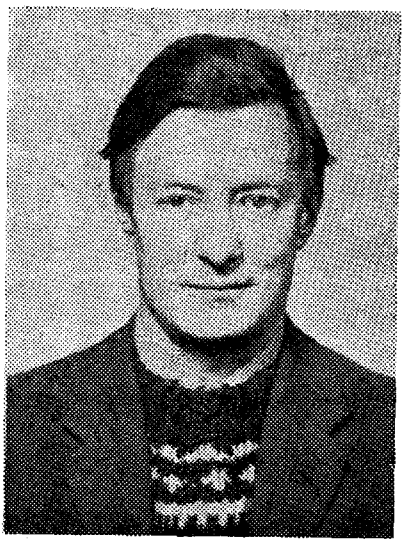
THE ARTS TODAY

Edited by Stuart Douglass

A DECLARATION OF INTENT

by a cameraman



Brian Peter Probyn, 47, art student, lay-out man in advertising agency, PoW, advertising agency again, publicity for SCR-USSR, art student again, on Government grant, relatively large sum of money for a mural in Festival of Britain, bought a ciné camera, went to Kodak's on shift work, poor wages but cheap film. Experimented with film in all weathers, seasons and time of day, developed 'hand-held' camera technique to avoid carrying tripod on a bus. First job with National Coal Board Film Unit and other documentary companies as assistant cameraman. Filmed Aldermaston marches in spare time and in Johannesburg for anti-apartheid film. First cameraman job documentaries for TV with Mai Zetterling. Staff photographer for Television Reporters International in Egypt, Germany, America, etc. Numerous other documentaries for ITV and BBC. A 'Wednesday Play'—'TheEnd of Arthur's Marriage' for Kenneth Loach leading to Ken's first cinema film 'Poor Cow', using documentary/TV techniques, i.e. shot entirely on location. Recently completed 'Long Day's Dying' an anti-war film directed by Peter Collinson.

THE problem besetting most artists is to reach a wide audience. It was this that moved me from easel painting and murals and when there were too few blank walls, on to the tiny TV screen.

The trouble with TV is reaching too many too often. Things are done 'at the double' literally. You are expected to run with a camera on your shoulder to satisfy the insatiable demands of the viewing public. A certain standard is required but quality rarely counts. The BBC can be more adventurous than ITV which plays to the

Continued on page 122

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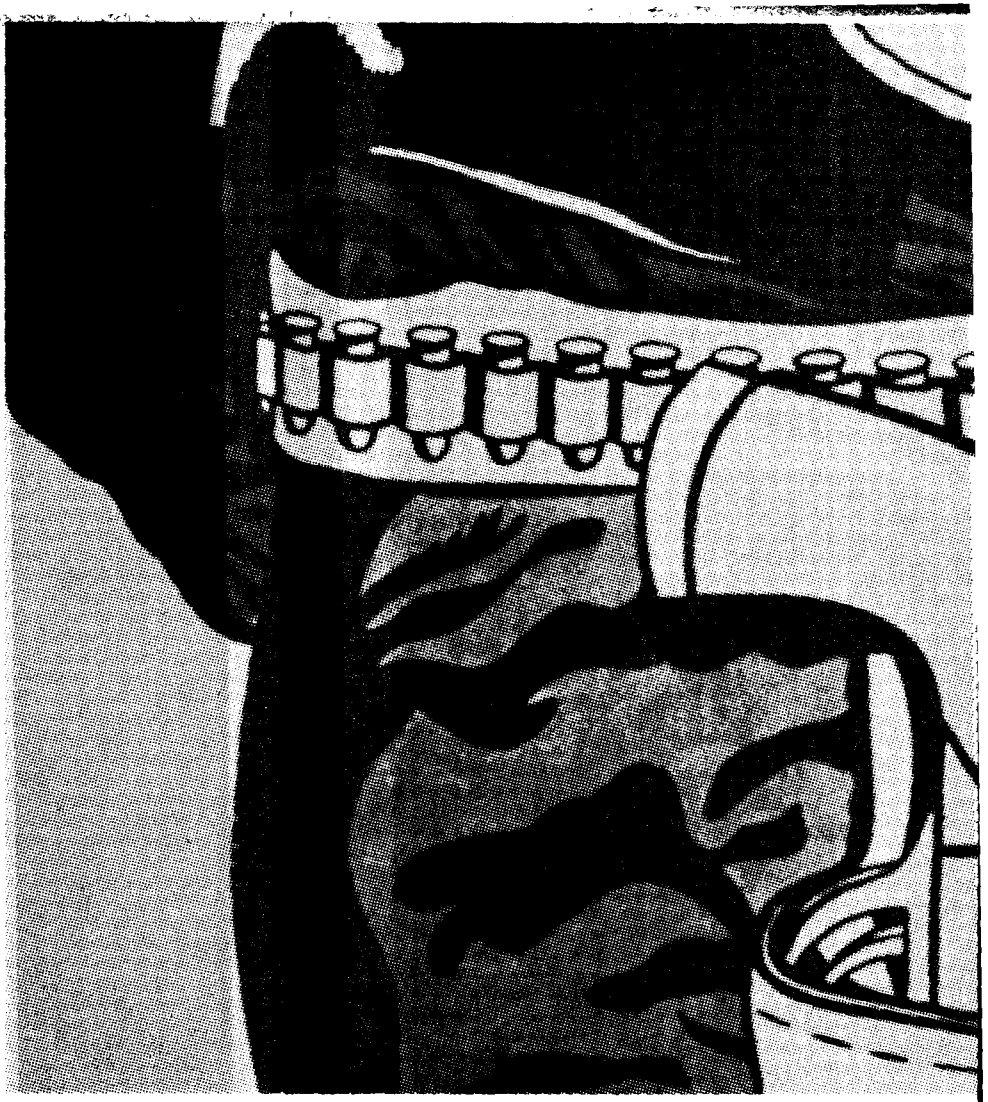

FASTEST GUN ROY LICHTENSTEIN

SOME RETROSPECTIVE THOUGHTS ON THE LICHTENSTEIN EXHIBITION

What! paint bits out of comics? Dots and all? That's just about the end! Look at Leonardo! Look at Rembrandt! Leonardo? Ah yes. Those fantastic caricatures; those crazy machines which never would have worked. Rembrandt? His brother dressed up in armour?

Perhaps it would be better to paint nymphs and satyrs as did Poussin or 'The Legend of the Finding of the True Cross', after Piero dela Francesca!

Where does the painter find the starting point for his work? Not the inspiration but the starting point; the form that enshrines the content? Well, it is in the bric-a-brac of the society around him—the landscape he has created; the landscape he romanticises; the fancy dress he wears, the objects he treasures, the gods he worships; the form of the form of the form he paints.

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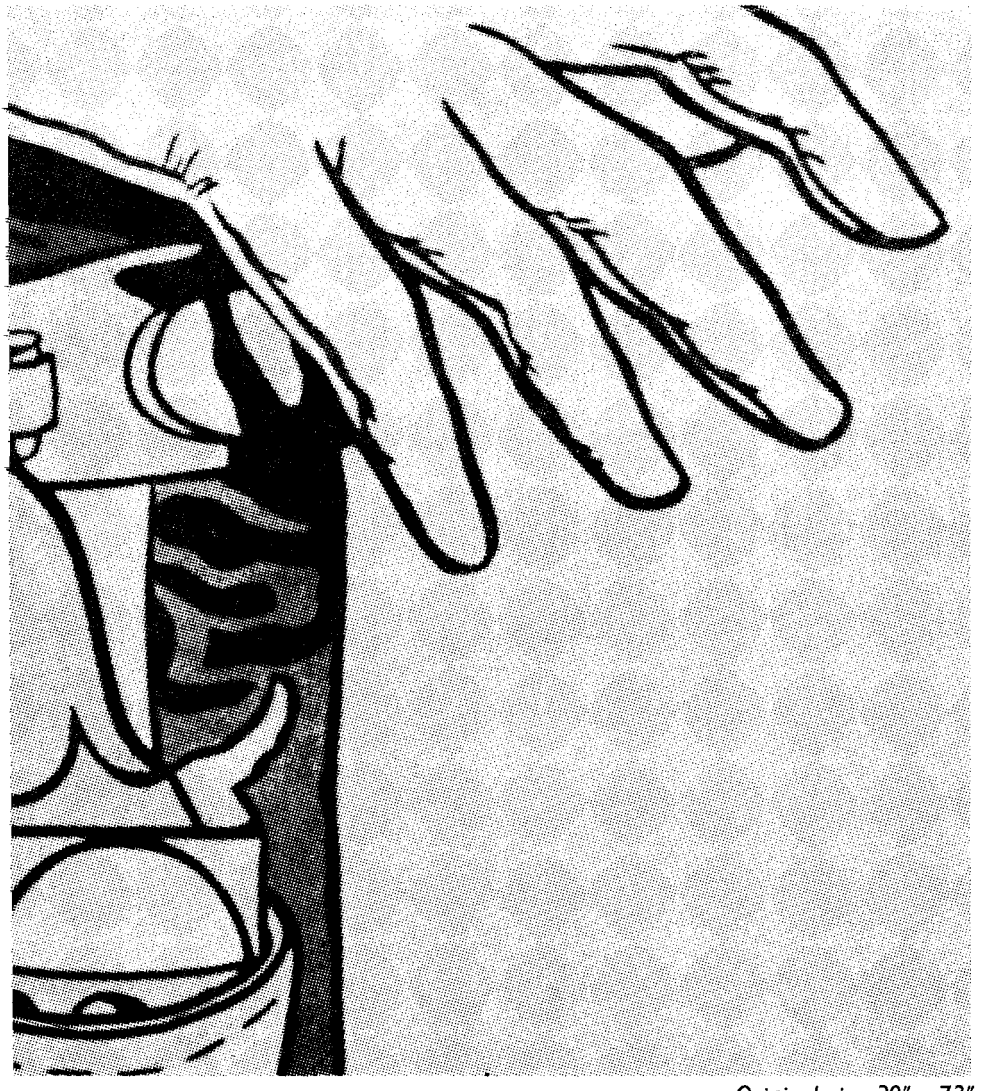

Original size 30" x 72"

BOB DAWSON

Comics fill the litter bins, adverts fill the magazines and cheap reproductions cover the walls. Let us look at them. Let us isolate them and blow them up huge and examine them:

How trite they are. We knew the sentiments were cheap and superficial: my god they are. But our kids read this; and our neighbours; and we do too—or we might if we were Americans. If you take a little piece of one, carefully selected, and blow it up big it changes; it becomes a new thing. The shapes, adjusted by the artist, become a balanced unity; the colour has the startling primitive boldness of Leger. The dots, hugely enlarged from the printed page, become objects in their own right. Reduce it back to catalogue dimensions and it is lost.

Amused, caustic, critical, affectionate, these paintings make a statement in purely painterly terms about the life around the artist.

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Continued from page 119

lowest common denominator, the biggest advertising audience.

Occasionally, ITV chiefs allow their personal foibles to influence programmes. One who is a Mason has been known to suppress a programme on Masonic rites. Programmes on the Arab/Israeli war have been modified by the Zionist sympathies of another Mogul, and so on. Occasional lapses but they need watching. In time of real crisis the ITV bosses will certainly show who pays the piper.

Even without this interference most cameramen for both BBC and ITV will find themselves photographing 'talking heads' ad nauseum. Only during riots, tragedies like Aberfan or the Vietnam war do people reveal their true feelings and their relationship to the world around them. Most of the time things go on inside people's heads and what they say and what they really think differ. Documentary programmes tend to cover only the surface of a particular problem. It is only after the cameraman has departed with all his lights and cables that the wife lets fly at her husband with some home truths. On the other hand a dramatised documentary becomes the same as a play or film, as true or as false as the script and the actors.

Of course, some good has come of this indecent haste. A whole new approach of portraying reality, a mobile camera, natural lighting, synchronous sound and the Zoom lens triumphant. Much sophisticated light-weight equipment has been evolved for TV filming. To get the same results on the cinema screen the cameras are twenty times as heavy with all the cumbersome paraphernalia that this entails.

In the film industry proper they take their time. More people, more light—more electricity available, not more understanding. One big snag—films are very very expensive to make, and most of the big capital is American. They also make a pile of money for America, the bigger the film budget the more safe and orthodox the script.

Nor will these problems solve themselves with a less mercenary economic system. Mass media will always receive close attention from whatever powers that be. It is now that the groundwork for a liberal attitude to future TV and films must be done. Unless the importance of artistic freedom is recognised the habit of thought-control all too soon becomes the accepted norm. The best way to fight for this essential freedom is not by attacking the forces of progress but by joining them. It's a war on two fronts against the enemies of progress without and within.

BRIAN PROBYN

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POETRY

Rickword Edgell

PUBLIC POETRY AND SOCIAL ADVANCE

OF RECENT YEARS the opportunities of *hearing* poetry have increased tremendously, but it is still a far from natural thing to ask a visitor to listen to a record of a poem rather than a piece of music. Some of the weaknesses of our modern poetry derive from this almost surreptitious indulgence in spoken verse. It results among other things in an inadequate familiarity with the resources of verbal rhythm, which many people cannot detect at all in the printed line. The socially-conscious verse of the younger generation can achieve highly effective cries of protest, but spasmodically. The sustained rhetoric which is required to take command of and finally convince an audience emotionally, is generally disregarded. Indeed, it seems that Verlaine's exhortation to 'take hold of Eloquence and wring its neck' has been accepted too indiscriminately. We may be well rid of rhetoric in private poetry, but it remains relevant in wider forms of address.

At the International Poetry Festival in London last summer, the contributions of the Anglo-Saxon representatives, from whichever side of the Atlantic were notably lacking in elocutionary fervour. Indeed in one or two instances the mumbling and muttering and shuffling of papers became quite embarrassing. By contrast, those whose cultures had their roots in civilisations on the shores of the Mediterreanean electrified the audience. They had the confident stance and delivery of men accustomed to exhort and argue face to face with their fellow citizens, in sun-drenched public places. There was a dramatic moment in the first session of the Festival at which Pablo Neruda was called to the rostrum. Before beginning to read, he announced: 'I dedicate this reading and all others of mine to the honour of the political captives seized by the military usurpers in Greece.' (I quote from memory.) There was a perceptible silence before the applause broke out—not from disapproval, but from the very unfamiliarity of such a gesture.

To Neruda, as to all contemporary poets of his stature, I would say, there can be no intelligent differentiation between political themes and others. All experience is political and all reflection involves a philosophy of history. It is the treatment that differs, where the emphasis falls. Obviously it falls differently in his love-poems, in his Cold War poems (*The United Fruit Co.*, for instance) and in *The Summits of Macchu Picchu*, wherein the tremendous achievement of the Andean civilisation is realised against the immensity of its peaks and abysses and the fraility of the physical entities that created it. But it was the majestic confidence of Neruda's delivery that brought awareness of a third dimension in poetry, to which the audience responded enthusiastically.

More recently, the relevance of poetry to men subjected, for their political convictions, to the extremities of hardship, anxiety and even torture, has been exemplified from

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Greece, and not for the first time. The direct account in the Sunday press (February 11) of the way in which Mikis Theodorakis and his comrades carried through the composition and transcription of a new musical work, the setting of a sequence of 32 poems by last year's Nobel prize winner, George Seferis, needs no emphasis beyond the bare facts.

In an earlier and not less sordid betrayal, at the end of World War 2, when the Greek Resistance was betrayed by its former allies, the fathers and the elder brothers of the present captives were marooned on these same penal islands in the Aegean, the tourists' paradise; and they too found in poetry a stimulus to survival. Now at the same time as this, 1947 or so, there was imprisoned in Istanbul (an easy flight away for a gull), and had been already for six years, a Turkish poet whose verses, by their severe social comment, displeased the authorities, notably since they had become widely popular. Nazim Hikmet, as his name was, wrote many poems in jail, and being a Marxist was well aware of all that was going on in the outside world. His health deteriorating, the prison doctor diagnosed angina pectoris, whereupon Hikmet wrote a poem with that title in which he exonerated the harsh prison conditions from causing his disease (though they undoubtedly had) by attributing it to the strain of his sympathy with men everywhere who were fighting or suffering in the cause of freedom. 'Half my heart', he wrote, 'is in China, with the Army going down to the Yellow River . . .

> Then again, every morning, Doctor,
> Every single morning in Greece,
> My heart is shot through at dawn.

Somehow, a manuscript copy of this poem found its way to the prison island which numbered among its inmates the poet Melelaos Londemis. He consulted with his comrades and they composed an answer to the Turkish poet whose name and work and courageous partisanship were well known to them—

> Nazim Hikmet, co-habiter of hell
> Yesterday I heard you groaning in Greece.
> It was night, the hour was bitter,
> It was the hour when we bound our wounds
> And we lifted the bandages that we might hear you
> Groaning, from the little dungeon of Istanbul,
> Into all the dungeons of the world.

In 1951 in the Philippines the poet Amado V. Hernandez was arrested, accused of rebellion and given a long prison sentence.

In 1964 he was cleared of all the charges against him, and given the Manila Cultural Award: 'in commemoration of his courageous, dedicated and sustained portrayal of the social realities of our time'. In response, Hernandez said: 'I ascribe meaning to this honour in so far as it is a proof that the artist is directly involved in the lot of men with whom he has been destined to live.' The following stanzas from a poem by the Poet Laureate of the Philippines express, more compactly than prose can do, the theme of these notes:

> Like Man:
> a poem is created by one who is also a god;
> the mind of the poet often performs miracles,
> a few coarse-grained words, apprehended,
> become bullets and roses.
>
> Like Man:
> a poem bears its own measure, melody, rhythm,
> the three elements of its loveliness;
> and freedom is the wing of a poem
> that makes it soar.

From *Rice Grains*, Selected Poems of A. V. Hernandez. International Publishers, New York, 1966.

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MUSIC

The Seeds of Love

Compiled and Edited by Stephen Sedley

Essex Music in association with the English Folk Dance and Song Society, 250 pp., 12s. 6d.

IN THE FOLK SONG REPERTORY of any community, love songs indicate the measure of sophistication. Among primitives, they are scarce; the repertory is chiefly made up of functional pieces for magic, work, and ceremony such as weddings and funerals. Among more socially developed peoples,the functional songs shrink and the lyrical diversionary songs become the more important part of the folk repertory. The English folk song tradition is one of the most sophisticated in the world, and accordingly its most sizable, most powerful and most characteristic part is made up of love lyrics.

The Seeds of Love is an anthology of rather more than a hundred traditional love songs of England, Scotland and Ireland. Words, tunes, and guitar chord-symbols. It's a good broad selection comprising a number of the sentimental masterpieces of country workers' sung poetry, as well as bawdy bits that appear in the folk song repertory more often than our genteel folklorists pretend, though not so often as students and other amateurs might imagine.

The collection is in eight parts, ranging from songs of casual amorous encounter, through courtship, dalliance, lost love, betrayed love, fatal love, ill-matched marriage, and true love. It's always interesting to speculate on who created the songs—a man, a woman, a girl? Often the evidence is unreliable; Burns, for example, wrote some of his profoundest and most intimate love poetry from the viewpoint of the woman. All the same, some psychological generalisations may be formed even from relatively small collections such as this. None of the songs of amorous encounter are from the woman's viewpoint, and very few of the songs of dalliance. On the other hand, nearly all the songs of lost and betrayed love (and those of fidelity in love as well) look as if they were made by women. The songs of fatal love, and of ill-matched marriage, are about equal; in the songs, men mourn as women do, and are just as plagued by horrid partners.

This is a charming collection of songs for singing in private or public; a popular book, not aimed at scholars. Accordingly, Stephen Sedley has turned his editorial hand to the majority of the songs he has chosen, and faced with several versions of the same song, he has picked a stanza here, a line there, to make what he feels are complete, coherent and satisfying texts. It's a familiar and justifiable practice, when compiling a song-book for general, non-scientific purposes. But in the present case, the principle is extended even to the melodies, several of which are collated from sundry vairants; that's a hazardous practice which seldom pays off. I recall Vaughan Williams once saying to me: 'The practice of altering a folk tune is an abominable one; and I wouldn't trust anybody to do it except myself!' I'm not at all sure that the tampered tunes in this book are improvements on original vairants; and for the matter of that, some of the collated texts are disappointing too. Surely one could have done

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better by *Drowsy Sleeper* (Miss Baez sings an American version as: *Silver Dagger*) and *Hares on the Mountain*, both of which have enchanting stanzas that don't appear here. Then too, several of the versions that the editor has cobbled together from here and there, exist in tradition in satisfactory complete and pleasant forms and it's hard to see where the need to collate comes in (*Ratcliffe Highway*, *Blow the Candles Out*, for instance). Sometimes the editor's principle of ironing out dialect proves treacherous, notably with Scots songs. In *The Trooper and the Maid*, a pregnant girl is hopelessly trailing after her lover's regiment, and the song says (in Scots):

She's grown sae fu', she couldna boo,
An' he's left her in Dunfermline.

It comes out pretty flatfooted in English as here (p. 19).

She's grown so full she could not bow
And left her in Dunfermline.

One might carp at the inclusion of some pieces which aren't folk songs (the Burns settings, for instance, or bourgeois squibs such as the parody on *The Hunt is Up*, or *Supper isna Ready*): one might also cavil over some inaccuracies in the explanatory notes. For example, the melody of *Sellenger's Round* is not a composition by William Byrd—it was introduced into England from Ireland by Sir Anthony St. Leger ('Sellenger') in 1548, when Byrd was five years old. True, Byrd made an arrangement of the tune subsequently; so, for the matter of that, did Bach, in his 'St. John Passion' chorale, *In meines Herzens Grunde*. But these are details of no great weight to the ordinary reader or singer. More important, *The Seeds of Love* puts into the hand a garland of handsome poems, set often to tunes full of mystery and surprises, reflecting the various ways, tender, blunt, secure, desperate, but never soft, never posturing, always dead honest, in which the lyrical spokesmen of the lower classes in these islands have viewed the passions and trances of love. A fine song-book, particularly for beginners seeking to build a repertory of songs for singing in the kitchen, the car or the folk song club. Or, under the breath, in bed.

A. L. LLOYD

LOOK FORWARD IN ANGER

(*The following extract from R.P.D.'s Notes of March*, 1958, *is reprinted in view of its aptness today and its definition of the task of the creative writer and artist.*)

ANGER IS A HOLY THING. Anger with the existing conditions of life of class society—or, translated into intellectual terms, the critique of existing institutions—is the beginning of wisdom. It is sometimes said by fools that Marxist literary criticism demands that the writer or artist must directly present a specific political conclusion in his work, must offer a ready-made formula to answer the problem of the situation he reveals. This caricature would not survive five minutes of study of what Marx wrote on literature. The province of the writer and the artist is to *see* and to *feel*—to see life truthfully, with all the passion of his being and the strength of his understanding, and to depict it with a vision which illuminates the vision of all of us, makes the familiar new, awakens dulled and dormant capacities of feeling, and deepens the sense and understanding of life and human relations. To draw the conclusions remains for the hearer, the viewer, the reader, for the process of thought.

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CORRESPONDENCE:

IN THE HEAT OF THE NIGHT

I SHOULD LIKE to add to the criticism already expressed by Declan Mulholland (November, 67) of Roger Woddis's Review (Oct. 67) of the award-winning 'In the Heat of the Night'. I hope that it is merely unfamiliarity with the US scene which accounts for the Polyannalysis. If called upon to review a film glorifying 'The Happy Life of a Fairly Well-to-do and Influential Pie-card', would your only reaction be 'look how seriously the ruling class is forced to take that worker'?

There is no question that Black America is standing up. This is reality, and films reflect it. The question is, how do they colour the reflection? In dealing with this advance, do movies welcome and foster it? Neutrally record it? Or try to hold it back and narrowly channel it?

The overriding message of 'In the Heat of the Night' is that the Black man can 'make it' (to $180 per week!) *provided he has the proper white allies.* And, these proper allies are right inside the oppressor government—in this case, the local mayor and the northern and southern police structure. Message for whites: changing times make it in your interest (as an oppressor) to swallow your prejudice and help Blacks who will co-operate with authority. (Just as you embrace labour mis-leaders.)

Throughout the film we are kept tensely, agonisingly aware that if Rod Steiger lets his prejudice get out of hand and goes back on Poitier, the Black cop is a dead duck. Every time Poitier prowls the town *alone* we nervously fear the worst. Steiger needs Poitier—temporarily—to clear up a local mess which embarrasses him. Poitier needs Steiger—and a northern police chief's voucher, which saves Poitier from being framed up for the killing—to stay *alive.*

This lesson is most graphically—visually—rubbed in by the scene where three local white toughs corner Poitier in a garage. Poitier grabs a hefty metal bar. We should be in for the famous Hollywood scene—agile good guy mops up roomful of bad guys. It would be a much more plausible scene here than usual, since this good guy is presumably highly trained in self-defence.

But no—the scene is resolved by Steiger looming up in the doorway and calling off the would-be attackers. Black man saved again. Variants of this same theme of tension—with the same white-father resolution—are built up in each major 'beat' of the film. Yes, you too can cut a dash (even slap a millionaire) like Sidney, provided you line up with your people's most immediate oppressor: the police.

Ghetto uprisings in the US today are the outstanding manifestation of the Black liberation struggle.

'In the Heat of the Night' *reflects* the Black advance—partially, individualistically. Its role is to glamorise 'safe' (for the rulers) goals and so to contain Black Power—not to extol it. What else would one expect from imperialist America?

LEN RAGOZIN, New York City

Mrs. Barbara Morris, who wrote the review article on William Morris in our February issue, on which appreciative letters have been received from readers, is an Assistant Keeper at the Victoria and Albert Museum.

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GREECE—THEIR FIGHT AND OURS

Betty Ambatielos

THE collapse of King Constantine's attempt on December 13, 1967, to oust the self-styled 'National Revolutionary Government' which, on April 21, 1967, seized power with Nato arms, brought to an end any illusion that the governments of the USA, Bonn and Britain would not tolerate dictatorship in Greece.

It opened a new phase in which the imperialists are 'stabilising' this area of the Nato south-eastern flank, the foreign monopolies extend their control over Greece and the Junta digs in whilst simultaneously acquiring a new image to conceal its fascist and brutal face.

On January 23, 1968, the US resumed normal diplomatic relations with the Junta. Bonn also, and 'after consultations with other member nations of Nato' (*New York Times*, January 22, 1968) the British Labour Government followed suit.

The US action was described by the *New York Times* (January 24, 1968) as a 'Boon to the Junta' which gave it 'an enormous and unnecessary political and psychological boost'. Foremost among the considerations which had led to the resumption of relations, said Senator J. K. Javits, was 'the preparedness of Nato forces in the Mediterranean'.

The same *New York Times* (January 24, 1968) pointed out that there was concern 'on a pragmatic basis . . . that the Greek forces in the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation are being weakened by lack of heavy material. Small arms, ammunition, spare parts and other maintenance stocks continue to be supplied to the Greek forces. . .'.

So it was for Nato—and no doubt also the interest in dragging the Cyprus question back into the Nato orbit for 'settlement'—that the US and its Nato partners, Bonn and the Labour Government sacrificed the interests of the Greek people. It was to pour military aid into the Greece of dictatorship installed at the crossroads of Europe, Africa, Asia and the Middle East that Britain was dragged in tow behind the USA. How much backing is still needed to secure implementation of the Labour Party Conference resolution, for expelling Greece from international bodies, recently recalled in a Parliamentary motion signed by more than 60 MPs?

President Johnson was not long in announcing 'most-favoured'

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nation treatment, and, with undisguised glee, Junta Minister of Co-ordination, Makarezos explained that: 'the formal declaration of President Johnson excluding Greece from the countries affected by the reduction of investments abroad and of the foreign loans from American banks and institutions, indisputably constitutes an act of major importance for our country' (read 'for the Junta'!)

US 'aid', of course, had *not* ceased after the April 1967 coup; '. . . since the putsch of April 21, 1967,' wrote Marc Marceau, Athens Correspondent of *Le Monde*, 'American private investments in Greece have been multiplied, rising since that date to more than 120 million dollars. So, whilst official aid is refused, that from the private sector is assured; and the left hand gives what, for political reasons, the right hand no longer offers . . . the Pentagon and other military leaders in Washington show themselves favourable towards the regime. . .'.

That the Pentagon favours the regime is not surprising, for the regime favours the Pentagon! One of the first acts of the Military Junta was to sign the Litton Agreement (previously rejected by all Greek governments and political parties). The US Litton company is closely bound up with the Pentagon, for it produces Polaris missiles and electronic equipment for the US military programme. The Agreement gives it exclusive rights to develop the West Peloponese and Crete for 'tourism'. But the existence already of the Nato nuclear 'training centre' on Crete—with its base which is so frequently used by the US Sixth Fleet—should dissolve any idea that tourism is their aim. Litton, Esso Papas and the West German, British and French monopolies are now preparing for a colonial heyday in Greece.

In the first two months of 1968, the Junta carried out a veritable purge of all the high-ranking royalist officers in the army, navy, air and security forces. Scores of extremely right-wing officers with long records of anti-democratic struggle have been dishonourably discharged including, for example, Lt.-General Dovas, a prime mover in the plan for the terror elections of 1961. Hundreds of other officers have been promoted to fill the vacancies thus caused and they have been given a 20 per cent pay increase. The miserable Mr. Kollias who began his anti-democratic record more than thirty years ago with his adulation of Hitler, who became the Junta's first Premier but stuck by his King, was discarded by the Junta. Junta 'strong man' Papadopoulos, who tours the country proclaiming his sacred mission to 'clean up' the country and end corrup-

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tion found jobs for his two brothers by placing them in his own Ministry to the Prime Minister.

These steps, following on the thousands of dismissals of civil servants, the arbitrary sackings of University Professors, educationalists, etc. means that the Junta has dug in deep in the forces, the State machine and all spheres of public life.

Whilst so doing, it is busy putting on sheep's clothing by taking off its military cloak. It was decreed that all officers from the rank of major downwards holding positions in the State apparatus, return to military barracks. Those above the rank of lieutenant-colonel, however, could remain provided they resigned their commissions. Papadopoulos, Pattakos and Makarezos became 'civilians' in December 1967. This decree concerned mainly Ladas, Balopoulos, Mexis, Karydas and Papadopoulos (brother) who had been installed as the Junta's watchdogs in the Ministries of Public Order, Tourism, Welfare, Public Works and Premier's Office, respectively. They abandoned their military ranks with alacrity and thus remain with a firm grip on the State machine as 'respectable civilians'.

This 'civilian' regime is now allegedly busy preparing to take Greece back to constitutional and Parliamentary democracy (some regard the triumvirate's donning of civvies as a first step towards the eventual formation of 'classic political parties' for elections in which the electorate would choose between say, the party of Papadopoulos or that of Pattakos!). The constitution 'for a guided democracy', the Junta says, will be put for the people's approval by September 1968. A draft Constitution submitted to the regime in December 1967, was said by one of Britain's 'top' Conservative newspapers on January 22, 1968, to make it plain that: '*Restrictions embodied in the draft would make it easy for all opposition to be stifled.*' It is clear for all to see that the very forces which destroyed constitutional and democratic government cannot possibly restore it. It is unfortunate in this respect that the important condemnation of the dictatorship by the Consultative Assembly of the Council of Europe in January 1968 allows the Junta a breathing space of many months to 'restore democracy' or be expelled.

The Junta is divided by personal ambition and other differences. It is its sense of instability and consciousness of condemnation abroad that explains its ruthless efforts to crush the Greek people, and its readiness to acquiesce in some of the demands of foreign public opinion.

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So, whilst their inquiry on behalf of the Council of Europe showed Messrs. W. E. Siegmann and S. Silkin, QC, that: 'The regime is undoubtedly a dictatorship (where) to a great extent human rights and fundamental freedoms . . . were suspended . . . (and where there is) fear and mistrust', the pressure of international public opinion compelled the release of Andreas Papandreou, of the Centre Union who was charged with high treason and of the composer and EDA deputy Mikis Theodorakis. Solidarity with the people of Greece is of vital importance *and can be immensely effective.*

The repression is worse, say the Greek people, than during the Nazi Occupation. No one is free from the fear of dismissal from jobs, of being called to the security to sign a loyalty certificate, of searches, arrests, tortures and death. Whilst the Council of Europe Delegation (which was not allowed to visit Leros or the Athens Security Police Station) could not get Papadopoulos to confirm or deny torture, it is common knowledge that Inspector Lambrou in Athens, Kouvas in Piraeus and Zagouras at the Dionysos Military Camp for Adolescents direct and carry out tortures which leave innocent citizens cripples for life or mental wrecks from sexually-oriented tortures (especially for women). The 'bloodless' coup has already cost lives and many more will die unless the political prisoners are released soon. The Christmas Amnesty of these saviours of Greece's 'new Christian society' was a mockery. 200 women and 600 men remain on Yioura and more than 2,000 men on Leros—apart from the hundreds in military camps and security station cells.

These men and women, whose every life could fill a book of incredible suffering and struggle, of human dignity and devotion to the highest ideals of Man, are, however, 'just communists' to the inhuman beasts who hold them. Only twenty people had been held without trial since the April 1967 putsch, Papadopoulos told the Council of Europe Delegation. When they questioned the figure (Vide: Council of Europe Doc. 2322, p. 28) they were told that 'this did not include communists' (the term 'communist', Senator Siegmann rightly adds, is given a 'very wide interpretation by the present regime').

In this, the first stage of the people's struggle against the Dictatorship, the Patriotic Front (which now has its Workers' Section and some industrial sections, as well as that of Women) aims to circulate information and ideas, obstruct the Junta's activities and put forward the people's demands.

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This Patriotic Front, must be deeply rooted among the people and, at the top, constitute an alliance of equal and autonomous political parties struggling in common and separately. The most important thing at this stage is the development of mass struggle.

The 'underground' is active. Not only are leaflets, slogans, bulletins etc. produced by the Patriotic Front, the Democratic Defence (Centre Union), EDA (United Democratic Front) and the KKE (Communist Party), but the printed underground paper *Avgi* and *Adouloti Athena*, organ of the Athens Committee of the KKE, also appear.

The people are beginning to organise and put forward their demands; the first memoranda from employees and civil servants on issues affecting them have been submitted to the authorities.

Unity is developing. There is a consensus of views between Left and Centre and many right-wing anti-dictatorship forces, on a programme to bring down the Junta, restore constitutional and democratic freedoms and the free functioning of all political parties and organisations, the dissolution of the Junta and free election.

This coincidence of views is found also to a large degree among the many hundreds of thousands of Greek democrats abroad. Mrs. Helen Vlachou, newspaper proprietor of the Right and Mr. Plytas, former right-wing Mayor of Athens, maintain their stand against the Junta; Mr. Andreas Papandreou representing the Centre Union stressed in London on February 7, 1968, that 'the Greeks, putting aside all their old squabbles, are joining forces in the great national effort to liberate their land'. 'Our Party knows', said KKE First Secretary, Costas Koliyannis, in London in October 1967, 'that the struggle will be hard and demand many sacrifices, but our people, with international solidarity, will restore democracy and freedom and put Greece on the road of progress.'

POVERTY, THE CUTS AND THE COMING BUDGET

Margaret Morris

BY the end of 1968 more people will be poor and the poor will be poorer. This is a dismal forecast but will undoubtedly prove true if the Government's policies continue in their present direction. The general standard of living is being eroded by the price rises being imposed as a result of devaluation, plus all those slipped in under its guise. It will fall still lower after the Budget with its de-

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cleared aim of clamping down on consumer spending. This must mean that families until now just above the poverty line will be dragged down to it; and life for those who are already poor will be that much meaner. The cuts will also bear most heavily on the poor.

During the devaluation debate Mr. Wilson promised to protect the poor against its effects, but the Government is failing to do this. The Social Security benefit scales fixed last October will not be adjusted to take account of the rise in the cost of living until next autumn. In the meantime the two million families receiving regular weekly allowances, the majority of them old age pensioners, and all those in need for short periods, numbering 1½ million families in 1966, must make do as best they can. Almost one family in five seek some help from the Ministry of Social Security in any one year.

It is the families whose purses are empty before the end of the week who are most likely to go without the medicines or dental treatment they need. A rebate scheme won't solve this problem—a practical point to be added to the opposition to prescription charges on principle as a 'tax on the sick'.

The Ministry of Education has forecast that the increase in the price of school meals may lead to a 10 per cent reduction in the number of children eating them. Letters have gone to parents inviting them to apply for free dinners if their means are limited, but some parents may prefer to withdraw their children rather than expose them to being singled out as 'free dinner children'. Some may pay the extra, but the strain on the family budget will mean the children eat less well at home. As I showed in the January issue it is not just the children of the very poor who are below the British Medical Association's standard of nutrition. Only the better-off families rise above it. Experts disagree about whether the standard is right, but until more is known about nutritional requirements for optimum health and well-being, it is surely incumbent upon the Government to safeguard the nation's children by seeing that they all get school dinners and milk. The abolition of milk in secondary schools, the pettiest, meanest economy of the lot, is also the most irresponsible.

Those who have low incomes are often deprived in other ways. It is they who will suffer most from the cutting down of council building and the postponement of the raising of the school leaving age. The thousand and one economies which must follow the freezing of local government expenditure will mean lower standards in both education and welfare services, and will prevent necessary expansion. All this will hit hardest at the poorest.

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The number of people who are called 'poor' is a political question. The Conservative Party and other advocates of selectivity favour methods of calculation which produce a low total. Progressive sociologists, on the other hand, have proposed drawing the 'poverty line' above bare subsistence needs. They argue that poverty is relative and that a rich industrial country such as Britain—despite the temporary problems caused by our military pretensions and absurd attachment to the use of sterling as a world currency—should be able to ensure all her citizens a standard with a margin above the minimum. For practical purposes both schools of thought make use of the Ministry of Social Security scales of subsistence needs. Yet even in using this measure the result is affected by political considerations and attitudes of mind. Are the 'poor' only those below the Social Security standard, or do they include those living at that standard? The actual standard of those receiving benefits is determined not only by the basic scales but also by the amount of discretionary extra payments received and by the disregarding of small items of income and savings. Should allowance for these extras be incorporated into the standard by which those not receiving benefits are judged? It is the answers to these questions which determine the result.

The recent Government report on poverty in families with two or more children made no allowance for extras (not even the 9s. addition given to all long-term recipients of benefits) or for disregarding the first £1 of family allowances. Even with this stringent interpretation of poverty, it was found that 500,000 children were in families below the line either because of the low wages of the father or because of the infamous wage-stop. Another 750,000 children were in families receiving Social Security benefits. These figures would have been much worse if the number of the poor not receiving benefits had been calculated against the actual highest standard of those receiving benefits instead of against the bare scales. For example, 4 per cent of the families with a working father were regarded as poor, but another 5 per cent had total family resources (including family allowances and wives' earnings) less than 40s. above the line, and another 4.3 per cent were between 40s. and 60s. above. This means that one in eight families where the father is in full-time work endure a standard of living below or much the same as those families receiving supplementary benefits.

Unfortunately, the Report does not show how many families are in the next group—i.e. clear of the Ministry's standard of needs

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even when they are interpreted liberally, but by no more than £1 a head. It is these families who run the risk of being dragged down to the poverty level in real terms by the Government's present policies. Low wages are the cause of the greatest numbers living in poverty. The position is modified by mothers who work: 1½ million mothers contribute to the family income. Half of them work only part time and their earnings are very low but their earnings reduce the number of families below the poverty line.

Old people are the second largest group living in poverty. Since the Ministry of Social Security was set up more old people have been encouraged to apply for supplementation of their pensions. Roughly a quarter now do so. Very many others live at a standard only just above the Ministry's scales, i.e., £7 10s. plus rent for a retired couple and £4 15s. plus rent for a single person equals approx. £10 and £6 15s. A recent Ministry Report showed that 47 per cent of retired couples had below £10 and another 23 per cent between £10 and £12 10s. 66 per cent of single men and 77 per cent of single women had below £7. Poverty and closeness to poverty is a majority, not a minority, condition among the old.

It is clear from the facts outlined that the Government must discard the Tory myth that, apart from a small number of 'poor families', there is a wide margin for luxuries in working-class incomes. On the contrary, roughly half the men earn wages amounting to less than £1 a head above subsistence if they have a wife and 2 children. The general reduction of living standards must be halted: if the Government wants more money it should take it in income tax or corporation tax from those who can most easily afford it.

To protect the poor and those near poverty it will be necessary not only to reverse the present trend of policy but to take positive action. The two most important steps needed are the introduction of a minimum wage of £15 a week as put forward by the T & GWU and an increase in the help given to families with children. Both are necessary because the first alone would still leave many families even with only two or three children at a bare subsistence level. Government help to families now takes two forms: family allowances and child tax reliefs, which cost the Exchequer £160 million and £650 million respectively. This money is badly distributed as the lower half of income earners don't get as much tax relief as the higher half. Some advantage goes to the man with two children after his income reaches £9, but the full advantage is not given until he reaches £22 a week. It is then worth 19s. a week for each child

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under 11, 23s. aged 11-15 and 27s. aged 16 plus. These sums are much higher than family allowances. Adding together the value of family allowances and tax reliefs a man with 3 children receives £59 12s. at £10 a week, £158 8s. at £20 and £174 13s. at £30. This is a means test in reverse—those selected for the greatest assistance are the richest!

The Government has warned that it will reduce tax reliefs in the Budget, but this will deepen child poverty still further if this leaves the lower and middle groups of taxpayers worst off—even their small amounts are vital to the balancing of their budgets. Low and average income families need more help not less with bringing up their children. The best solution would be to lump together tax reliefs and family allowances and pay it in a single form as family allowances. To allow for rises in the cost of living, the allowance should be fixed at 30s. a child, including the first child.

For old people, the great need is an increase in the pension. Otherwise more and more old people will be forced to go to the Ministry of Social Security. Already the old are being forced into the humiliation of a change from pensions and benefits as of right to means-tested benefits. Even if the present subsistence standards are somewhat higher than earlier minimums, they are still a poverty standard. The aim of social policy should be to ensure that no one else is dragged down to that level and to raise the standards of those already there.

MORE ON BRITAIN'S 'INVISIBLES'

Hugo Rathbone

AS was shown in the first part of this article published last month, the Reddaway report* on the position of British investments overseas was backed by the big industrial monopolies as represented by the Confederation of British Industry.

The Report† now reviewed was issued by a body styled the Committee on Invisible Exports with W. M. Clarke as Director of the study. It was set up to investigate the extent of commercial earnings made by those connected with the City and their like all over Britain as a result of their commercial operations overseas. On this

* *Effects of UK Investment Overseas:* an interim report by W. B. Reddaway; Cambridge University Press, 25s.

† *Britain's Invisible Earnings;* a report of the Committee on Invisible Earnings. Director of the Study: William M. Clarke. British National Export Council, 45s.

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Committee we find a principal Director of two of the Big Five banks, five directors of the chief Merchant Houses and other London Clearing House banks, the Chairman or President of the Baltic Exchange, the Chamber of Shipping, Lloyds, British Insurance Association, Association of British Chambers of Commerce, British Federation of Commodity Associations, British Export Houses Association and finally a member of the Council of the London Stock Exchange. No more formidable or all-embracing committee representing every aspect of 'City' activity could well be found.

These two reports can be taken as representing the two sides of finance capital—the big industrial monopolies and the big banking and financial monopolies. Just as the Reddaway report was partly a defence of the machinations of the big industrial monopolies relating to their earnings from their surplus capital exported overseas, so this Clarke report is a defence of the earnings received, in the words of the official Balance of Payments report, by 'banks and other financial institutions for services including brokerage, merchanting, arbitrage, banking charges and commissions, underwriting of capital issues, risk underwriting and other insurance' etc.—earnings many of which were made in the promotion and management of investments overseas by the industrial monopolists, as dealt with in the Reddaway report.

This Clarke report in its 266 pages goes in very great detail into every section of these invisible earnings, after freely drawing on the experience of the 'City' organisations most of which were directly represented on the investigation Committee. After a year's work it gives detailed recommendations in order to bring out that the value of these invisibles can be more fully publicised and their accuracy and greater inclusiveness can be extended.

The Committee is obviously wanting to meet the widely held suggestion that the elaborate apparatus of this side of the 'City's' activities is no longer earning its keep and deserves to be regarded as a Cinderella of the Establishment. When this report was first published last autumn it was quoted extensively by some of the principal dailies such as *The Times* and *The Financial Times*. It was left to *The Times* several weeks later to reveal that the repercussions of the report had certainly gone deeper than might first have been thought. For it was stated by this paper's City Editor on November 21:

> Invisibles are coming into their own at last. Clearly the recent report revealing the positive part played by this frequently neglected sector is having its effect. *For the first time ever* the Bank of England in its latest directive to

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other banks has put the promotion of invisible exports on the priority list. (Our emphasis, H.R.)

Cinderella, Cinderella! You can think of no greater honour than to be so promoted by the Grand Old Lady of Threadneedle Street herself!

The report shows conclusively that not only the total of invisibles from investments, shipping, aviation and from all other City activities has been steadily rising from early days back in the beginning of the 19th century, but also that British imperialism has a greater percentage of invisibles than any other imperialist country except the United States and that it can claim all along to have provided a substantial section of the credits of British imperialism which it can use to set against the persistent deficits in its balance of payments.

On almost every item of these invisible earnings the Report raises some query as to the accuracy of the generally accepted estimate or advocates the need for further investigation in some way or another. As the need for work on these lines has already been accepted by some of the organisations concerned, we accordingly turn to the Government's 1967 Balance of Payments report issued by its Central Statistical Office (CSO) for a full statement of these hitherto accepted estimates, though it is quite possible that some of the figures may well be revised following on the innumerable points raised by the Clarke Committee—all doubtless in an upward direction as both the CSO and Clarke, when giving them, use some phrase indicating that they are on the conservative side if anything.

The totals in the table are given under five main heads for 1966 (the latest year available) and the two former years for comparison, 1964 being the first year in which the CSO started publishing a breakdown enabling a distinction to be drawn as to whether the figures given were the result of personal or commercial activities; for example, under both shipping and aviation passenger revenue has been deducted leaving only receipts from freight charges, etc. The table is as follows:

TOTAL OF COMMERCIAL INVISIBLES

	1964	1965	1966
	(in millions of £'s)		
Shipping	651	697	716
Civil Aviation	44	46	55
Business Travel	(1)	(1)	48
Other Services	396	421	425
Interest, profits and dividends	899	1,002	940
Grand Total of all INVISIBLES	£1,990	£2,166	£2,184

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Explanatory Notes:

(1) Business travel receipts are included only for 1966 as this is the first year in which business travel has been separated from other travel receipts.

It may be objected that in all these sections even in the Other Services section there are considerable debit items which should have been deducted from the totals given. In the case of interest, profit and dividends the debit is due to the increasing investments mainly by American interests in Britain; in the case of Other Services the debit is due to royalties, trade commissions on exports, advertising fees, etc., that have to be paid overseas. These contrapayments, however, in no way invalidate the fact that the totals we have given are chargeable in one way or another on the income of those who have experienced exploitation by British imperialist interests.

It will be seen that the grand total of all these invisibles—£2,184 m.—has continued to rise, as before, even over the last few years. As was pointed out in the Clarke report the total comes to well over a third of Britain's overseas income (p. 260) and even after the omission of all identifiable non-commercial items these earnings are still just on 30 per cent of all overseas income both from visible and from invisible trade. Obviously no one with any real justification can say that such invisible earnings are but a Cinderella of finance capital's Establishment.

Finally again we would emphasise that this total does not include any estimate of the value to British imperialism of the enormous exploitation arising from the difference between the low prices which the developing countries get for the raw materials and other goods they export and the ever rising prices of the manufactured goods that they must import from the richer countries. There is no current estimate even on a global scale of the total losses sustained in this way by the developing countries. Jack Woddis, however, in his recent book, *An Introduction to Neo-Colonialism* (p. 94), recalls that 'For all the developing countries it was estimated at the 1965 session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development that at the present rate of robbery arising from the unequal exchange the total loss in the year 1970 for these territories would be 7,000 m. dollars'.

Make no bones about it. These two reports under review—that of Reddaway and that of Clarke—clearly show that the oligarchic rule of finance capital, that merging of banking and industrial monopolies which holds sway in Britain today, is still increasing its exploitation of peoples overseas, whatever is alleged about the fading away of British imperialism throughout the capitalist world.

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BOOKS

Big Victory, Great Task

General Vo Nguyen Giap

Pall Mall Press, 120 pp., 37s. 6d.

THIS BOOK IS a translation *in entirety* of a series of essays by the victor of Dien Bien Phu, now Minister of Defence of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, which were published in two official periodicals in Hanoi on September 14-16, 1967. It is a clear, comprehensive and well-reasoned appreciation of the military and political situation in South Vietnam in its broader context six months ago, the correctness of which may be gauged from the degree to which its forecasts of developments the towns of South Vietnam are now proving true.

It is important to note that General Giap does not accept the view that the war in Vietnam 'cannot be won by either side'. On the contrary, he insists, not only that it *can* be won, by the Vietnamese people only, but also that it *must* be won by them if there is to be peace in the world. He does not underestimate the difficulty of the task which still lies ahead, but is confident of ultimate success (a) because the Americans have already exceeded the restrictions of a 'limited war', and therefore cannot 'escalate' it further, and (b) because 'the South Vietnamese people of all walks of life, including those who did not realise the true nature of the US aggression and were *fooled into following them*, have now stood up to fight the enemy', notably in the towns. Perhaps even more important, at the present juncture is the clear message which General Giap has addressed by implication to the people of Britain, when he writes:

> 'Our great national salvation resistance, glowing with its just cause, has enjoyed correct political and military doctrine and the united strength of our people. This struggle is also of great international significance, because it contributes to the defence of the socialist bloc and is advancing the movement to liberate the peoples and secure world peace. It is a great contribution of our Vietnamese people to the common revolutionary struggle of all the peoples of the world to oppose imperialism, headed by US imperialism, and to achieve national independence, democracy, socialism and peace. Can a small country, *which relies mainly upon its own strength*, defeat the limited war of the American imperialists, the arch-imperialists, who possess great material and economic potentials? This is the burning question of our time. The Vietnamese people are answering it with their victories, which are their great contribution to the peoples of the world. History has entrusted this glorious mission to our people, who are determined to fulfil this historic task. It is for this reason that no national liberation struggle in history has ever obtained as much vigorous and comprehensive support from the world's peoples as ours is obtaining. It is enjoying great assistance from the brotherly socialist countries and strong sympathy and encouragement from progressive people all over the world, including the American people.'

This is a statement of the fundamental issue at stake, to which many people in this country have been blinded by anti-communist prejudice, and of which others may have lost sight in the smoke-cloud of quibbling that has gone on about relatively minor factors bearing on the war in Vietnam. In the

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light of it, we must all feel ashamed that a Labour Government of Britain has consistently supported, and is still supporting, the US in their 'dirty war' against those who are fighting in our cause. We must surely determine that this scandal shall cease without further delay, and that our country shall side with its real friends.

EDGAR P. YOUNG.

Report From Iron Mountain

Introduction by Leonard C. Lewin

Macdonald, 142 pp; 18s.

THIS BOOK PURPORTS to give the text of a Report made to the government of the USA by a group of fifteen prominent but anonymous American citizens who are said to have studied over a period of two and a half years, partly in an 'underground nuclear hideout' at Iron Mountain, New York, and partly elsewhere, the problems of how to attain permanent peace in the world and how to make the transition from war to peace. ('War', in the Report, means not just actual warfare but the whole general 'set-up' of governing large countries on the basic policy that they *may* at any time embark on actual warfare and *must* at all times be ready to spend large sums on maintaining their 'capability and readiness to make war when doing so is judged necessary or desirable by [their] political leadership'; and 'peace' means not just an interval between wars but a state of society in which nations live side by side without contemplating—still less preparing for—warfare between one another.)

The essence of the purported Report is, firstly, that 'peace' is probably unattainable, and in any case would not be in the interests of 'society', and secondly—as the basis for the view that peace is 'a bad thing'—that 'war' confers a great many advantages on society, and should therefore not be given up unless and until it is clearly proved that these advantages can by one means or another be maintained, or satisfactory substitutes supplied, in peace.

What are these advantages of war, and what are the real functions of war in the modern world? The answer offered in the Report is that 'war itself is the basic social system'; that specific wars are not caused by international conflicts of interests, but that 'war-making societies'—i.e., all modern industrial states of the sort considered in the Report, which is written as if there were no such thing as socialist states or socialist economies, and as if what Marxists regard as the contradictions and defects of capitalism are simply the abiding and unalterable facts of life—'require, and therefore bring about such conflicts'; that the primary economic function of war is *waste*, which is essential for the avoidance of slumps and the disposal of 'excess' population, and that in modern industrial societies (defined as those which have developed the capacity to produce more than is required for their survival) only war can stabilise the advance of their economies, just because it is highly wasteful; that if war were abolished national sovereignty and the 'traditional nation-state' would disappear; that war is a safeguard against the 'elimination of necessary social classes' and preserves whatever degree of poverty a society requires as an incentive; that it provides anti-social elements with an acceptable rôle in the social structure; and finally that the armed forces provide the principal state-supported haven for the unemployable.

On the second question, whether peace can find substitutes for all these advantages of war, the group is said to have studied a good many possibilities, including the creation of more poverty

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(rejected as not sufficiently wasteful), a great extension of space research, systematic pollution of the atmosphere, poisoning of the main sources of food and water, and slavery (with the concession that it must be 'sophisticated') which it is said 'may be an absolute prerequisite for social control in a world at peace'.

Inevitably the question is asked, how much of all this is 'spoof' and/or satire? Most people will hold, as I do, that the group of fifteen never existed. (One may be encouraged to believe that it did, because its existence has been officially denied by the US government, but I feel that that government has now reached the class described by an Irishman who said that his opponent was 'such a liar that you cannot even believe the opposite of what he says'.) But as spoof or satire it is certainly well constructed.

D. N. PRITT

Critics of Society
T. B. Bottomore
144 pp., 25s.

Political Representation and Elections in Britain
Peter G. J. Pulzer
166 pp., 30s.

The Restrictive Society
John A. Lincoln
162 pp., 30s.

George Allen & Unwin

THE WAY IN WHICH modern capitalist society moves is often intricate and complex. But it is useful to consider how much of the complexity is made up of surface phenomena, hiding rather than lighting up the fundamentals. Speeches by the Prime Minister, for example, are often masterpieces of the art of dealing with the semblance of reality rather than reality itself—though this clouts the Government with remarkable regularity.

Mr. Bottomore, in a useful book sub-titled 'Radical Thought in North America', suggests that 'the rapidity of social change during the past century has confounded the thinker's effort to grasp the principal forces which are at work in modern societies' and goes on to question whether classes and class forces have the same importance in determining the course of social life.

Yet earlier, in criticising the Galbraithian notion that there is now less interest in economic inequality, and that 'the progressive increase of aggregate output is now seen as an alternative to redistribution', Mr. Bottomore has no difficulty in getting to the heart of the matter: 'I think that this view is to some extent an illusion produced by the temporary conditions of sudden and unaccustomed prosperity'.

Mr. Pulzer says that simplicity is sometimes achieved at the expense of over-simplification, and that 'a division of society into two is not as easy as Marx and Engels once imagined it to be'. But, while this particular criticism would doubtless have raised a smile from Marx and Engels, one has to ask where Mr. Pulzer's mass of factual and useful material leads him.

Ultimately, he argues for the present electoral system because 'the right to vote periodically opens up countless indirect methods of expressing wishes and grievances at other times'. And, for him, the Government's intention to keep a permanent 'watching brief on wages, prices and incomes . . . restores to the politician a degree of initiative which is bound to revise our view of the relevance of elections'. What, however, when the next Conservative Administration continues basically the same policy, using the (increasingly obvious) subtlety of the two-party system?

Or, in the same coinage, what of Mr. Lincoln's view that all 'restrictionism' should be outlawed by means of

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Common Law action, when the greatest restrictions on industry and trade stem from Government action both within and in support of the capitalist (and two-party) system?

Making his final assessment, Mr. Pulzer (unlike Mr. Bottomore), shuns class questions. But how to understand things without them? The increasing bipartisan nature of Parliament is not a sign of the system's strength, nor is Lord Robens' proposal for a 'Gt. Britain & Co.'. To recognise class forces is not to oversimplify political movements; it is often where complications start. But there is no understanding reality without them.

ALAN BROWN.

The Nature of Democracy, Freedom and Revolution

Herbert Aptheker

International Publishers, 128 pp; 12s.

THIS LITTLE BOOK by the well-known American Marxist Dr. Herbert Aptheker is particularly timely. For it deals with some of the basic theoretical and political problems of our time, problems which occupy a central place in the present world-wide struggle against imperialism, for socialism and national liberation.

The imperialist powers, with US imperialism in the van, have always sought to camouflage their brutal, cold-war aims by proclaiming themselves 'The Free World', and declaring that the issue in conflict is 'freedom and democracy' versus 'totalitarian dictatorship'.

The intensity of the propaganda barrage, coupled with the complexity of the problems themselves, have created considerable confusion in the minds of many otherwise progressive people. This is of inestimable value to the imperialists helping them to divide, weaken, and limit the forces which, potentially, can be mobilised against them.

Dr. Aptheker strikes at the roots of this confusion by divesting the concepts—'freedom', 'democracy'—of the general, abstract, above-class framework in which they are so frequently presented. He shows that the character and features of freedom and democracy are determined by the concrete, historical, social and political circumstances prevailing at any particular time.

He traces the modern development of the concepts of freedom and democracy in the bourgeois revolutions in Britain and France and the American War of Independence. He shows that the outcome of these struggles was not freedom and democracy for all, 'in general', certainly not for the poor and the propertyless, but a variety of freedom and democracy which served the interests solely of the new exploiting bourgeois class.

This approach illuminates both the positive features and the limitations of freedom and democracy under capitalism. In so far as capitalism is victorious over feudal tyranny, its political institutions represent a great advance and widen the frontiers of human freedom. But capitalism, by its very nature as a social system based on the exploitation of the majority by the minority, means that the freedom and democracy which it is possible to win under it—although of great importance—are, in the last analysis, freedom and democracy primarily for the exploiting minority.

Dr. Aptheker is thus able to pose—and answer—the questions concretely, not abstractly. His questions are—'freedom for whom?', 'what kind of democracy?'

JACK COHEN

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The aim of *LM* has always been to probe the current scene in depth; its analysis of events leading to contemporary conditions is surely unique, and of particular value just now. RPD's Notes, and our specialist articles each month, are necessary equipment in combating onslaughts on living standards and preserving hard-won trade union rights.

We welcome with gratitude the outstanding number of donations this month. Our many good friends, always at the ready when *LM's* need is greatest, have rallied round us magnificently and this helped us to face a very difficult situation. **Helen Falber.**

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